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SUBJECT: NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY IN TAJIKISTAN: NO
OVERSIGHT COULD LEAD TO NO PERFORMANCE

REF: (A) KRYSTEL-HUSHEK E-MAIL 5-30-2007

11. Summary: Embassy Dushanbe strongly opposes granting National Endowment for Democracy funds in Tajikistan to the "Center of Democratic Transformation" to open a Women's Leadership School, as included in the June 2007 list of project proposal (ref A). This local non-governmental organization has a history of non-performance and hostility toward Embassy officers; and post recently had to terminate a Democracy Commission grant because of non-performance and lack of results.
End Summary

12. The Center of Democratic Transformation received a Democracy Commission grant in August 2006 to strengthen Tajikistan's multi-party political system through the creation of a website for political parties and organization of discussion roundtables in northern Tajikistan. After months of inactivity, particularly in the critical period leading to Tajikistan's presidential election in November 2006, the grant was terminated in May 2007.

13. When the embassy began exercising oversight on how the funds were used, organization representatives began accusing the embassy of "spying," and threatened to "tell the world" about embassy corruption. The Center for Democratic Transformation failed to create a functional website and falsified the attendance lists for the few seminars conducted. As a result of the non-performance, the embassy refused to pay the final grant funds. When EmbOffs flew from Dushanbe to visit the organization's office in early May for a pre-arranged meeting, the office was padlocked and the staff refused to communicate further with EmbOffs. During the extensive e-mail and phone communications with the organization's director, Fatemah Ahmedova, we learned she resides in England, and her brother Akhmed Kadirov nominally runs activities in Khojand.

14. ACTION REQUEST: Embassy Dushanbe requests confirmation that this project will not/not receive NED funding.

15. Comment. Our own experience with the Center for Democratic Transformation is instructive for Washington-based organizations who try to fund projects in Tajikistan without an in-country presence or direct oversight. Post has previously raised these concerns about National Endowment for Democracy funded grants. In general, NED too seldom consults with the Embassy and has provided very little information on the activities and results of its grants here. The versions of the proposals which we do see are typically written with generalized language and contain no detailed breakdowns of budgets or proposed activities. With

these limitations and in a country permeated by corruption, the Embassy on its own can do very little to ensure accountability for taxpayers' dollars. The Embassy strongly supports NED's goal of promoting democratic reform, which is also a top mission priority. However, we recommend NED consider how to exercise more oversight and work more closely with the Embassy in order to ensure its programs actually promote progress toward this goal. End Comment.

JACOBSON